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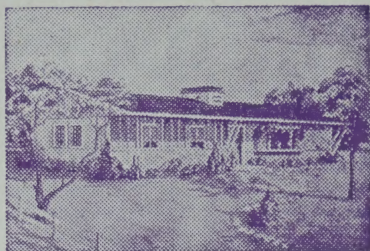
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Week of August 25, 1952

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THE CAPE PLAYBILL

Volume 4 No. 9

Week of August 25, 1952

The Cape Playbill furnishes weekly programs for the Cape Playhouse, Dennis, Mass., and the Falmouth Playhouse, Coonamessett, Mass. It is published weekly during the summer theatre season by the Cape Playbill at Kendall Printing Company, Falmouth, Mass. Advertising rates furnished upon request. Please address inquiries to Box 887, Falmouth, Mass.

All the Cape's a Stage

By MALCOLM HOBBS

(Editor and Publisher of The Cape Codder)

Another season of summer theatre draws to an end on Cape Cod—the Silver Anniversary-plus-one for the Cape Playhouse, Dennis.

Summer stock has long since come of age as part and parcel of The Cape summer season. It is here to stay, as much at home as the cranberry scoop and the scallop dragger. It is a good thing, too. Summer theatre and Cape Cod have made one of those happy amalgams in which each derives benefit. Of such a union, let no one cast asunder lightly.

Summer stock has been of tremendous benefit to the theatre because it has provided additional stimulus for the training and flowering of the players who make that theatre move. At just that season when the metropolitan stages slow down or close down, summer stock takes up the slack, providing a most heartening opportunity for aspirants and arrivals alike to ply their trade. An added blessing is the vacation locale in which summer stock plays, drawing the actors and actresses from the fretting hurly-burly of the cities to the rejuvenating atmosphere of places such as Cape Cod.

The playwrights, as well as the players, owe much to summer stock. Many a Broadway hit has received its trial and polishing on the summer circuit. Obviously, the more stages there are, the more plays have an opportunity of being played. All of which is a good thing for the theatre as a whole. The sum total of summer theatre's contribution to the American stage has grown steadily.

The benefits which have been brought to Cape Cod—which has played a pioneer as well as a leading roll in summer stock—also are many. The Cape as evolved over the years from a mercantile, fishing, whaling economy to a status where the vacation business is the principal source of native income. It is the mercantile, fishing and whaling that wrought the structure of the Cape Codder's famous character, that provided the rich and valid traditions of The Cape. Those yesterdays were glorious ones, a main-spring of national glory. And when history began to pass them by there was much grumbling and sadness. It is always sad to see glory pass, yet it passes often, and the Cape is fortunate in that the glory was so strong that it left a tradition which can be invoked rightly to this day.

The Cape was fortunate also in being blessed with a terrain which provided a successor economy—the vacation business. It is not ideal to have an economy based on intense activity two months out of the year. But such is reality and it does provide a springboard to the development of a year round economy. Summer stock has played a very important part in the Cape's vacation economy. It has brought considerable in a financial way and it has brought a cultural contribution as well. Summer theatre has been one of the important attractions which have made the Cape a mecca for the tourist and the seasonal resident.

If any proof were needed that summer theatre is an established and accepted phase of the Cape scene it can be found in the blase manner in which natives of summer

theatre towns such as Dennis accept the presence of Broadway and Hollywood stars in their midst. The most glamorous star merits only the slightest turn of the head.

In all of this the contribution of The Cape Playhouse has been notable and distinctive. It has brought the best of Broadway and Hollywood for the entertainment of its avid followers over the years. Comedy, tragedy, musical comedy, old plays, new plays, polished playwrights and aspirants have all appeared on The Playhouse stage. I think a special tribute should be made to Richard Aldrich et al for this year introducing classical ballet to the local scene.

They tell the story of the old Cape Cod storekeeper who rigged up an intricate system of mirrors and bells so that he could play cribbage in the back room with his cronies and be warned of customers entering his shop. In the midst of one particularly interesting game the bells tinkled and a glance at the mirror revealed to the storekeeper the presence of two prospective buyers out front. He groaned and raised a finger to his lips. "Ssssh, Joe," he whispered, "maybe they'll go away."

This typical Cape Cod story is completely un-typical of the attitude toward summer stock. Welcome, they say, and see you next season.



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AN ADVENTURE IN ART

by Vernon Smith
(President of the Cape Cod Art Association)

The Cape Art Association was indeed pleased to accept the invitation of the Raymond Moore Foundation to present in the Cape Arts Center Gallery in Dennis a series of group shows during this season.

The current show of Provincetown moderns is the fourth in this series and you who have visited the Gallery this week will agree that whether or not you like modern art, this is an exciting event. Eighteen canvases by the "avant garde" in one room has an impact of such force that it cannot be forgotten. For those who enjoy non-objective painting this is an opportunity to study the work of the top-flight moderns now being shown in this charming setting.

The season opened with an exhibition of oil painting by Cape Artists. Invited and arranged by Betty Lane of Brewster the show presented a cross-section of the finest work being done here. Displayed were pictures ranging from the more conservative to a semi-abstract approach. Among the exhibitors were Morris Davidson, Eliot Orr, Ross Moffat, Bruce McKain.

A delightful exhibit of sculpture and water color selected by Chaim Gross and Murray Kupferman followed. Works by Joseph Kaplan, Sol Wilson, Hondius, Mr. Kupferman and Mr. Gross were also shown.

Janet Folsom of Centerville was asked to invite and hang the third show in the series. She collected a most interesting group of contemporary portraits. Here one was given the opportunity of studying the diverse approach to portraiture by present day artists. It pointed up the

fact that there are more ways than one to paint a portrait. Channing Hare, Wallace Bassford, Barbara Swan, Polonsky were among the exhibitors.

The season will close with an exhibit of works of art owned on the Cape and loaned for the occasion. Dr. Walter Hovey of the Art Department of the University of Pittsburg is chairman of selection and promises a most interesting showing of the art Cape residents have chosen to live with. Included will be old and modern masters, ship pictures and primitives, portraits, and objects of art brought to the Cape by sea captains of long ago.

It is sincerely hoped that all of you will accept an invitation to visit the Gallery and enjoy these exhibitions.

Mrs. Marnie Chapple, director of the Gallery, will be there daily (except Sunday) from 1:00 till 5 and from 7 until nine.

AN INVITATION TO TEA

The Raymond Moore Foundation and the Cape Playhouse extend a cordial invitation to the patrons of the Wednesday and Friday matinee to visit The Cape Art Center to be their guests for traditional Tea Time immediately following the final curtain.

The trade cards appearing in the Cape Playbill are not mere advertisements—they denote those who reliably serve. They have been selected because of merit and reputation and represent people who help make this program available to you. We respectfully request that you visit them whenever possible.

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And So We Take Our Leave

It hardly seems possible that nine weeks have passed since first I sent my greeting to you on the opening of the 26th season.

The Cape Playhouse has this past quarter century been steeped in the rich heritage of the theatre. A formal chronicle of its long past would need listing of all the stars who have shone here and the youngsters helped along the road to stardom—an impressive list; it would need a roll of all the managers, directors, scenic designers, press representatives and others who have made this a living theatre. The mere fact that it has existed for so long and adapted itself so well in a changing world is a triumph in itself.

Born in the whirling twenties, it survived the low ebbing thirties, and save for the darkened war years, grew steadily in stature through the unsettled forties until it stands undisputed as America's Most Famous Summer Theatre.

To those who have followed the Playhouse the full route it is my sincerest hope that it has provided you with many many happy memories filled with a certain nostalgia. To those who have only recently become patrons may you sign our roster of permanent friends.

And now on the eve of departure our thoughts turn to the 27th year and the promise of yet another season of outstanding entertainment.

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A BACKWARD GLANCE

By RICHARD ALDRICH

In early June a major portion of the nation's legitimate theatre had literally begun to fold their tents and steal across the vast countryside in search of that very special audience that supports, each year, the summer theatre.

It was anticipated that hundreds of playhouses would be weighted down with all grades of professional and amateur theatres. With the prediction that vacation business was in for a good summer from Maine to the Poconos, summer theatres could logically look forward to capacity business each and every week of the short-lived two month season.

However all of this prophecy was not completely true. Many managers pointed to baseball, politics and television—three favorite national pastimes—that might gain the most important attention of the potential theatre patron. And they were only too embroiled in their own peculiar hazards. Star players and musicals made for high overheads. The two-month season, with new shows every week admits for small error in seeding, cultivating and harvesting a continuing attendance.

Summer theatre patrons might well be divided into two parts. The confirmed and the transient. The confirmed present no problems. Season after season they return faithfully attending each weekly attraction on the specific night of their choosing. The week-ending husband must often be harried and cajoled into what in some instances may be a long drive, double parking in a jam packed country lane, and in some cases admission prices that may be painfully reminiscent of Broadway.

However on Cape Cod this was not and is not the case. In fact we may readily refute, and with good cause, most of the highly debatable issues presented by managers prior to the opening of the current season. The basis for our original premise can best be substantiated by the fact that on the Cape alone some 2,000 playgoers are nightly enjoying a thoroughly diversified evening's entertainment at the Cape Playhouse in Dennis; the Cape Cod Music Circus in Hyannis; and the Falmouth Playhouse in Coonamessett.

Those three national pastimes (baseball, politics, television) have had no startling effect on my box offices. The Falmouth Playhouse has had its best season in its four year history coupled with the fact that both the Cape Playhouse and Music Circus are considerably ahead of last

year. Unquestionably the greatest problem that confronts the tent musical is that of finding suitable material. It is only a matter of time before the "immortal operas" will have been revived to the point of exhaustion and we shall be faced with a steady audience decline unless more musicals are released for summer production.

One particular instance in point concerning the box office response may best be illustrated by the recent Democratic Convention. At that time not only was the public supposedly grossly interested in the outcome of the convention but while the Cape was suffering its severest heatwave all three houses were playing to capacity audiences. An unusual innovation was holding forth at the Cape Playhouse where television was playing a histrionic role. That week marked the first time in the history of the theatre that an entire television cast had been transported from the video stage to that of the legitimate stage. The attraction was of course the entire CBS-TV cast of "Mama" which has now become a legend.

The summer theatre as it stands today has in general a marked uneven trend. No theatre can produce ten superlative attractions in one season as few Broadway producers can possibly present say four hits in a row. Furthermore from the first moment a play is announced until the final curtain, chance becomes the co-producer. No matter who the star or the author, no matter how perfect the production, no prediction can be certain.

There is no question that the summer theatres today are undergoing a change in audience. In fact playgoers are in close proximity to 42nd Street patrons inasmuch

(Continued on Page 14)

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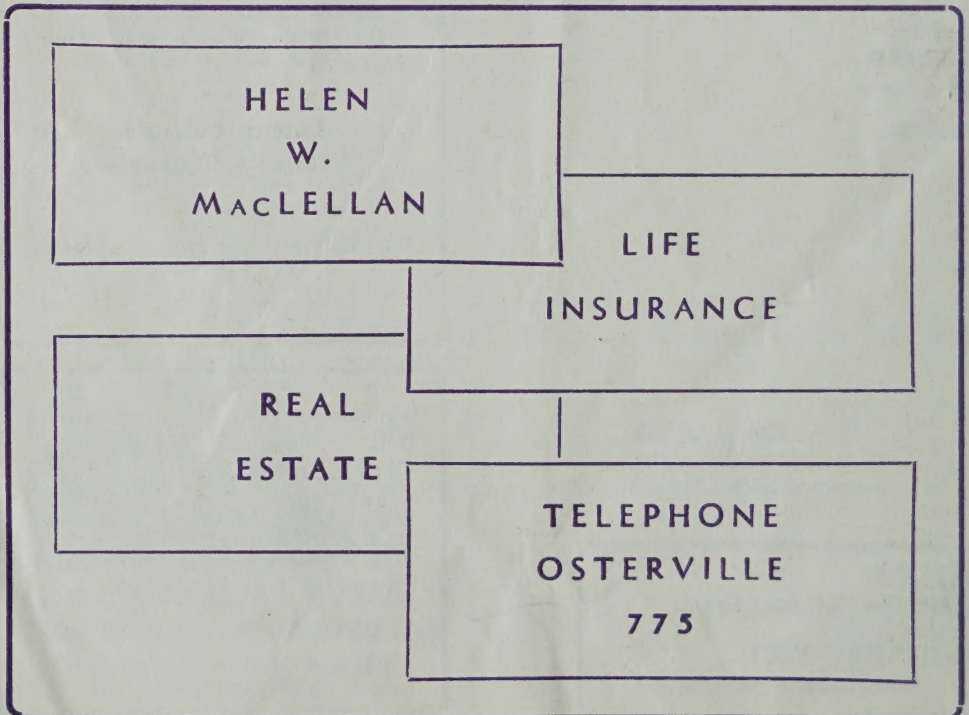
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6.		
Double Damask		
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Floorwalker		John Philip
7.		
References		
Sybil		MISS LILLIE
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3.

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TONIGHT AT 8:30

BEATRICE LILLIE

Beatrice Lillie is to the theatre what the pyramids are to Egypt: one of the best reasons for going there in the first place and something which if overlooked will mean that you've missed one of the wonders of the world.

As far as the public goes that is the way she has always been, but Miss Lillie remembers back to the time when she left her native Canada to join her mother and sister in London determined on a career as a serious ballad singer. For months there was a tedious round of agents with no encouragement whatsoever. As a last resort she called on Andre Charlot, the tremendously successful producer of intimate revues and asked if she could audition for him. Apathetically he consented and she launched into an athletic rendition of a song called "The Next Horse I Ride on I'm Going to be Tied on." As Charlot watched and listened apathy turned to apoplexies of laughter and the interview ended in a three-year contract for Miss Lillie.

From this point on her main problem was sorting out the offers with which she was deluged. One which she accepted was

an offer of marriage from Robert Peel, descendant of Queen Victoria's Prime Minister. A few years later at the death of her father-in-law her husband suc-



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ceeded him as the fifth baronet and Beatrice Lillie became Lady Peel.

But if the title was expected to change Bea Lillie, the actress, it didn't. By this time she had already made her American debut in another Charlot revue with two of Charlot's best known stars—Jack

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Buchanan and Gertrude Lawrence. Their reception on Broadway has become a theatrical legend. The critics raved, the public stampeded, and all three stars (already well established in England) sky-rocketed to the top in this country as well.

One of her next stage successes was Charles Dillingham's "Oh, Please" and later "This Year of Grace," the first of a series of exceptionally popular revues by a young man whom she had tried unsuccessfully to interest in earlier in the game. His name was Noel Coward.

Just before the outbreak of World War II Miss Lillie returned to London, and for five years entertained soldiers all over the battlefronts. Her only son was killed in action with the Royal Navy.

On her next visit to America she was greeted with a full five-minute ovation on her entrance in Billy Rose's "Seven Lively Arts" which also won her the Donaldson Award for the best feminine performance in a musical for that year.

Her most recent Broadway appearance was in the musical revue "Inside USA" in which she subsequently toured the country. Either undeterred by what she saw or, it is hoped, spurred on by the acclaim which she encountered everywhere,

Beatrice Lillie is now taking the ultimate step by making her initial summer theatre appearance. For other performers such a venture might be a risk. For Beatrice Lillie it is merely another way of adding laurels to her crown as Queen of Comedy inside USA and out.

REGINALD GARDINER

Reginald Gardiner recalls that when he first announced to his mother his intention to become an actor she burst into tears and exclaimed, "Oh, my dear boy, if I had foreseen this I would never have

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given you such a good education." Since that time, however, she has never had cause to regret either his decision or his education. Foregoing a career as an architect young Gardiner enrolled in the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art where he distinguished himself and immediately upon graduation won roles on the London stage. For the next several years he was cast in over 30 plays, performing an infinite variety of parts in Shakespeare, Ibsen, Shaw, O'Neill and Van Druten as well as in musical comedies and revues. Simultaneously with his theatre appearances he acted in more than 20 British motion pictures and also developed his own thoroughly original method of "imitating" inanimate objects (trains, lighthouses, and French wallpaper) with such astounding success that it was only a matter of time before he was asked to give a Command Performance before the Duke of York, later King George VI. Since that time Mr. Gardiner estimates that he has repeated his inimitable imitations at least 30,000 times.

By this point he was firmly established with the British public, but it took Beatrice Lillie to persuade him to come to

America. It was while they were appearing together in a Charlot Revue called "Oh, Please" in London that Miss Lillie first suggested that he try the migration. Two years and another Charlot revue later she arranged for him to make his Broadway debut in the Shubert revue "At Home Abroad" in which she and Eleanor Powell also took part.

That break led to another. Not very long afterward he was awarded a part in Miss Powell's first film "Born to Dance." He registered an instant success but interrupted his cinema career to return to Broadway for another revue with Miss Lillie, this one entitled "The Show Is On."

Since that time he has been seen in a succession of movies, notably "Sweethearts," "The Great Dictator," "The Man Who Came to Dinner," "Immortal Sergeant," "Claudia," "Cluny Brown," and "Elopement." Now credited with over 30 American films, Mr. Gardiner is temporarily forsaking Hollywood to return to the stage. His appearance once again with Beatrice Lillie is a welcome reunion not only for theatregoers but most certainly for himself.

A BACKWARD GLANCE

(Continued from Page 7)

as they are no longer as interested in obtaining tickets for an entire season as for each weekly attraction, depending on its star. In other words theatregoers have become extremely selective in their choice of entertainment. This is a new hazard to summer theatre managements.

A certain amount of this uncertainty must be attributed to the economic situation in the country today. But when you consider the consistently rising costs it

is a startling fact that the theatre ticket alone remains at the scale of years ago. Star salaries and high royalties are the greatest headaches for summer theatre impresarios.

The play, nevertheless, must go on and has gone on thus, through the ages, a combination of genius, physical endowment and circumstance. Summer theatre is incontestably the best live repertory of the best American plays of recent vintage. Many a triumph of the thirties is now an annual fixture in the hinterlands and many a favorite performer of that decade returns to add a special glamour and nostalgia. For that reason summer show business—for richer or for poorer—beset by troubles of every kind—will always be a tremendously vital part of the national scene.

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THE RAYMOND MOORE FOUNDATION, chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a charitable corporation, was formed for the education and benefit of the public by the promotion and fostering of music, drama, horticulture and the fine arts. Under the will of the late Raymond Moore, who founded the Playhouse in 1927, it was provided that all his estate should be placed in trust for this particular purpose. The Raymond Moore Foundation owns the Cape Cinema, the Cape Playhouse Restaurant, the Cape Arts Center and Gardens, and a controlling interest in the Cape Playhouse. All of these properties adjoin each other. The income derived from such ownership is used for its maintenance and development.

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